



February, 2025. Vol 29 #2



### Soup - Off!

Do you have an old family soup recipe you'd like to share with your SAGE friends? We are looking for a few good soup makers to fill up a crock pot and come to SAGE. The Soup - Off will feature eight or more soups to sample and vote for. If you'd like to enter, please contact Leslie at 315-478-1923 or llamb@sageupstate.org. Or, join us to taste! The event will be held on Saturday February 22, 2- 4 pm at SAGE. You can taste every soup for a donation of \$10 (more if you can, less if you can't). We'll have bread and salad too. All proceeds benefit SAGE Upstate programs for older LGBT people.

### This Month

Soup Off: Feb 22

Take Care Together Kick-Off: Feb 18

Theater Thursday: *Wicked* p.3

Potluck Raffle -- p 3

Thank You: p 4 & 5

SAGEVets profile: p 6

## SAGE Supports Trans Communities

The president has signed an executive order saying that our federal government will only recognize two sexes-- male and female. In New York state, transgender people have rights established by the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA). However, this move on the part of the current administration is chilling, and understandably, it causes fear and confusion. SAGE Upstate will never waver in its support of Transgender, Non-binary, and Intersex people, or any "enemies from within" as described by conservative politicians, such as immigrants, people of color, and women seeking health care.

Budget cuts have meant that SAGE no longer has funding to support our Ambassador program, but we are still dedicated to serving BIPOC, Trans, and Rural communities. We are now planning a series of events to cover issues related to these groups, as well as health issues facing older LGBTQ people. More news will be available in the near future about these efforts. In the meantime, remember -- SAGE stands with ALL members of the LGBTQ community.

## Changes at SAGE

In efforts to keep SAGE open and able to meet critical needs, it's become necessary to make some cuts that were very difficult. Our Ambassador Program is suspended indefinitely, and two of our staffers have been laid off. January 15 was the last day of work for both Johna, our Social Media/Office Coordinator, and Carol, our Office Assistant. We are working diligently to find funding to bring these positions back in some way.

Johna, Carol, Tim, Dori and Robin have done such excellent work in their time as ambassadors and staff members. Take a look inside on pages 4 and 5 for stories that celebrate their work.

## Take Care Together

Thanks to funding provided by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, SAGE will offer "Take Care Together," a program about social connection, moving, and learning and their effect on healthy aging. **A Take Care Together Kick Off will be held on Tuesday February 18, 11:30 am** in the SAGE Upstate Center. Over lunch, we'll explain the program so people can sign up.

Participants are asked to sign up for 4 programs per month from March to May, and participate in a monthly discussion group (in person and on Zoom). Are you already participating in a few monthly programs at SAGE? They count. Participants will continue on their own through summer, then in Fall we'll have a closing event with a meal.







Support and health strategies, make healthy aging possible. The Take Care Together program aims to understand how countering isolation with safe affirming programs leads to healthier lives.

In SAGE Upstate's work with older LGBTQ people, our main goals are to reduce isolation and improve health. Take Care Together will show us how these two goals work together. It will help us build better programs. What's in it for you? For starters, friends and healthy activities. We think you'll feel better in a lot of ways after taking this program.

To sign up for the February 18 Kick Off, please contact Leslie at 315-478-1923 or llamb@sageupstate.org.

*Made possible by:*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>February 2025</b>						1 2 pm Utica Potluck
2	3 6 pm Men's Grp	4	5 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	6 6 pm Dinner Out 10 am Walking	7 Falls Prevention Fitness, 11 am	8 7:00 Gender Blend
9 3 pm Syracuse Potluck: Black History Month	10 6 pm Men's Grp	11 10:30 String Cheese	12 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	13 10 am Walking 9:30 Breakfast Out 6 pm New Men's Group	14 Falls Prevention Fitness, 11 am 7 Men's Night Out	15 2 pm Watertown Potluck
16 2:00 pm Oswego Potluck	17 6 pm Men's Grp	18 6 pm Game Night 11:30 am Take Care Together Kick-Off	19 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	20 10 am Walking Group 12:30 Lunch Out 4:00 pm, Theater Thursday	21 Falls Prevention Fitness, 11 am	22 2 pm Soup- Off! 
23	24 6 pm Men's Grp	25 SAGEVets	26 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	27 10 am Walking Group	28 Falls Prevention Fitness, 11 am 6:00 Mahjongg	

Falls Prevention Fitness Classes: Fridays at 11 am at SAGE and on Zoom (see [sageupstate.org](http://sageupstate.org) for Zoom link).

Game Night-- play games in the center with your SAGE friends

Gender Blend: 2nd Saturday, social/support for Trans/Nonbinary communities. In person and on Zoom (details at [sageupstate.org](http://sageupstate.org)). For info contact Johna: 315-478-1923 or [jmelius@sageupstate.org](mailto:jmelius@sageupstate.org).

Knitting & Fiber Arts: Wednesdays at 7 pm. Learn, or work with others on knitting, crocheting, and other fiber arts.

Mahjongg in the Center, 4th Friday, 6 pm come and play-- if you don't know how, we can teach you.

Meals OUT -- Dinner on the 1st Thursday, Breakfast on the 2nd Thursday, and Lunch on the 3rd Thursday, See details on p. 3

Men's Night Out: Social for SAGE guys, 3rd Friday, 7 pm

Men's Peer Support group: this new group will meet on the 2nd Thursday. See details on next page.

Oswego Potluck, for all in the Oswego area and beyond. Bring a dish to pass if you are able.

Second Sunday Potluck in Syracuse. Program: Bring a dish to pass if you are able.

SOUP OFF: Join us on 2/22, 2 pm to taste 8 or more delicious soups made by SAGErs! See article on front page for more info, or if you'd like to enter a soup.

String Cheese: a new group for learning and playing stringed instruments. See details on next page.

Take Care Together Kick-Off: learn about this new program, have dinner and sign up! Details on page 1.

Theater Thursday: Join us this month for *Wicked*. See details on the next page.

Utica Potluck 1st Sat. 2- 4 pm, for all in the Utica area and beyond. Bring a dish to pass if you are able.

Walking Group Thursdays in Syracuse: The group meets at the benches by Panera at Destiny on Thursdays at 10 am

Watertown Potluck: 3rd Saturday at 2 pm, for all in the Watertown area and beyond. Bring a dish to pass if you are able.

Writers Group, Wednesdays at 5:30 pm: All genres and experience levels welcome. Offered on Zoom only-- link at [sageupstate.org](http://sageupstate.org)

**Next Month: Tea Dance and Bake Sale  
March 22, 1:00 - 4:00 pm**

## Theater Thursday: *Wicked*



### Thursday 2-20, one showing: 4 pm

In this musical, a film adaptation of the Broadway show, we find out what was going on in Oz before Dorothy showed up. Elphaba, a misunderstood young woman because of her green skin, and Glinda, a popular girl, meet at Shiz University in the Land of Oz. After starting as enemies, becoming dear friends, and meeting the Wizard, one becomes Glinda the Good Witch, and the other becomes the Witch of the West, who is of course, *Wicked*. Featuring Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo. This is the first half of a two part film adaptation. The second part is due November 2025. 2hrs 40 min. Popcorn provided.

### Meet your SAGE friends for a meal

To RSVP, contact Ron or Leslie at 315-478-1923 or llamb@sageupstate.org.

#### 1st Thursday Dinner: 2/6

6 pm, Tassone's Wine Garden  
113 Dexter Parkway Baldwinsille 13027

### String Cheese Music Group



Have you ever wanted to learn to play stringed instrument? Do you play already and want to join a fun group? SAGE members Carol B. and Vivian C. are starting a group called 'String' Cheese. On the 2nd Tuesday of the month, you can come to the center and learn the basics. Instruments can include guitar, ukulele, banjo, mandolin... as long as it doesn't have to be plugged in. The group starts at 10:30 am. Bring your lunch and enjoy eating together after playing! Instruments are not provided, if you are interested in learning but don't have an instrument let us know. First session: 2/11, 10:30 am, Contact Leslie at llamb@sageupstate.org for info.

#### 2nd Thursday Breakfast: 2/13

9:30 am, Gem Diner. 832 Spencer St. Syracuse, 13210

### New Men's Group

We have had many requests for a new group for men, as our Monday Night Men's group is currently full. A new Men's Peer Support group starts in February as a monthly gathering. We can make it more frequent if there is interest. If you are interested in joining the group or would like information, please contact Leslie at llamb@sageupstate.org Or 315-478-1923. We'll hold the first meeting on 2/13/25 at 6 pm, in person at SAGE.

### Outside of Syracuse

*Open to LGBTQ+ folks and Allies in these towns and beyond.*

**Watertown:** Potluck on the 3rd Saturday, 2 pm All Souls UU, 1330 Gotham St.

**Oswego:** Potluck on 3rd Sunday at 2 pm Trinity Methodist, 45 E. Utica

**Utica:** Potluck on the first Saturday (1/4), 2 pm Utica Unitarian, 10 Higby Rd.

#### 3rd Thursday Lunch: 2/20

12:30 pm, Sherwood Inn. 26 W. Genesee St. Skaneateles, 13152

## February Raffle AT ALL POTLUCKS

*also available in the Center*

### Onondaga County Parks Family Fun Package

It's worth a total value of \$92, and includes one day family passes to:

- Rosamond Gifford Zoo
- Cross-country skiing at Highland Forest
- Ski rental package at Highland Forest
- Golden Harvest Festival at Beaver Lake
- Jamesville Beach or Oneida Shores
- Vehicle pass for Lights on the Lake

Get your tickets at Oswego, Syracuse, Utica and Watertown Potlucks and in the SAGE Upstate Center. Winner will be announced at the end of the month.

Tickets: one for \$1, six for \$5.

# Thank You Johna, Carol

**Johna  
Melius**



**Carol  
Notar**



Johna worked in the office and was also our Trans Ambassador. She managed our database, refining procedures for tracking donations and participation. She put our social media on a whole new level, and I hope we can keep it up, but you will probably notice a difference! She helped out with fundraisers and programs too, tracking donations from the 5K and other events, and maintaining the 5K website. All that and she managed the center too.

As an Ambassador, she ran the monthly Gender Blend group, wrote an article on Trans issues for the newsletter, staffed tables at events, and just last month started a coalition made up of local providers of trans services. You may remember her daily email series on Trans leaders last November—Trans Awareness month. She will be continuing as a volunteer, leading Gender Blend and facilitating the coalition.

Johna reached out to many trans folks and brought them to SAGE groups, including Billy and Stacy who run our Watertown potluck. She met with people one on one and took calls helping people from trans communities get the resources they needed. Thank you Johna, for all of the above, and for your welcoming outreach which brought so many to SAGE.



When Carol started as Office Assistant, we were behind in terms of organizing our daily business activities. The bills were paid, but the coding wasn't in Quickbooks. She dug in and worked until we were caught up. This was no small feat—when you have a state grant, you must spend the money first and then get reimbursed. There were long stretches where we were waiting for those reimbursements and juggling which things could be paid and who would need to be called for a little more time. Carol did this for many months— and I bet you didn't know how difficult it was. She always has a smile for anyone who comes into the center.

She helped with all of our fundraisers and programs, managed refreshments for the 5K and did many other things to make our organization run smoothly. We are lucky she will be staying around to be and office worker volunteer .



She'll also donate her time to coordinate the volunteers who do the newsletter mailing each month. That system runs like a charm and Carol keeps things fun and light. We thank you Carol, for all you've done and for volunteering in the future.

# Tim, Dori *and* Robin



**Tim  
Lattimore**

**Robin  
Latham  
*and*  
Dori Colvin**



Tim was SAGE's Ambassador to BIPOC communities. In that role, he started an initiative called "Identity" which evolved into a program called "SPARK" (Social Pride Alliance for Rainbow Kinship). His work brought many from BIPOC communities to SAGE for SPARK programs and other events.

Last February, Tim coordinated daily profiles on local BIPOC leaders and sent them out in emails every day during Black History Month. Later that Spring, Tim called all of those folks to invite them to an appreciation lunch, and most of them participated. They offered great insights on organizing in BIPOC communities, and collaborations followed.

Tim worked with Jaleel Campbell of Project Out Loud to collaborate on many efforts, including the Intergenerational Day of Peace and the creation of a tapestry. At the Intergenerational Day of Peace, older and younger LGBTQ folks came together for dinner and discussions. The tapestry, made by the SAGE Knitting and Fiber Arts group and Off The Hook from Project Out Loud, will be hung in the center in the coming months (see pictures of the tapestry on page 6). Thank you Tim for your dedication and commitment and all you've done for SAGE.



Dori and Robin have been Regional Ambassadors for the past year, but they've been leading the Utica Potluck for a decade. That's right, I said a decade -- the group celebrated their 10 year anniversary in 2024. Dori and Robin are the reason this group has not only held together for so long, it's growing. They tell us that every month they find at least one new person.

This year, in addition to holding the potluck each month, Dori and Robin started two other groups. A twice monthly walking group met at Sangertown Mall, and once a month they held a lunch and learn, welcoming providers in the Utica area in for a talk and lunch.

A main goal for our organization is to help folks come together and build friendships and support networks, and people need support close to home. Dori and Robin live by this philosophy and have been dedicated to helping people come together in Utica. If someone needs a ride, they find it. If someone misses a few gatherings, they check up on them. They celebrate birthdays and happy times together, and lean on one another through hard times.

Thank you Dori and Robin, for caring and sharing your time.



And no worries, Utica folks, Dori and Robin will be volunteering to lead the potlucks every month!

We're saying thank you, and not goodbye! Not only were we lucky enough to work with these folks, they've all agreed to contribute some volunteer time on the projects they worked so hard to build. SAGE is committed to serving people in rural areas, and in BIPOC and Trans communities. Folks who are willing to volunteer for these efforts, please contact us.

**We also thank Billy and Stacy Monica for leading our Watertown potluck.**

## SAGEVets Veteran Spotlight: *Brenda Hanson*

*Brenda at the SAGE Holiday Potluck*



Brenda Hanson served in the US Navy from July 1980 - March 1985. She was trained in cryptology and at several posts she encrypted messages between US Navy bases and ships so any communications that found their way into the wrong hands would not be readable. She served two years in Japan and two years in Spain, with direct support onboard various ships including service on the Indian Ocean, and escorting carriers through the Suez Canal.

After her discharge, she moved south to Florida and used the computer knowledge she gained in the Navy to become a Computer Operator. She also took jobs doing data entry and later crossed the country as truck driver.

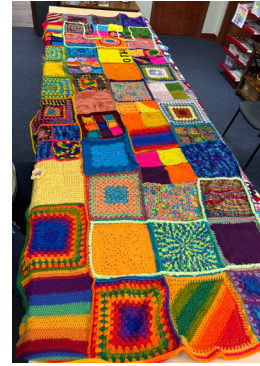
All the while, Brenda understood that something about her was different, and in 2023 she finally was able to

do something to express her true gender identity. Unfortunately, all that was available were street drugs to help with her transition.

Brenda had received help and benefits from the VA since her discharge. In early 2024, she decided to talk to someone there and found that the VA, could provide the meds she needed. Also at the VA, she participated in a presentation on trans issues. One of the doctors who spoke recommended SAGE Upstate. Brenda came to SAGE for the first time in Summer 2024.

When asked what she enjoyed about her service, Brenda said, "I got to see the world." She did that. During her Naval Career-- in addition to Spain and Japan-- she saw Israel, Portugal, Turkey, Italy, Thailand, and France. She fondly remembers a trip to Hawaii when the crew stood at the rail of the ship and saluted Pearl Harbor, a Navy tradition.

Since coming to SAGE, Brenda has been very active, participating in SAGEVets, Gender Blend, Fitness classes, Knitting & Fiber Arts, Game Nights, Potlucks and meals out. We're glad you found SAGE, Brenda, and thank you for your service.



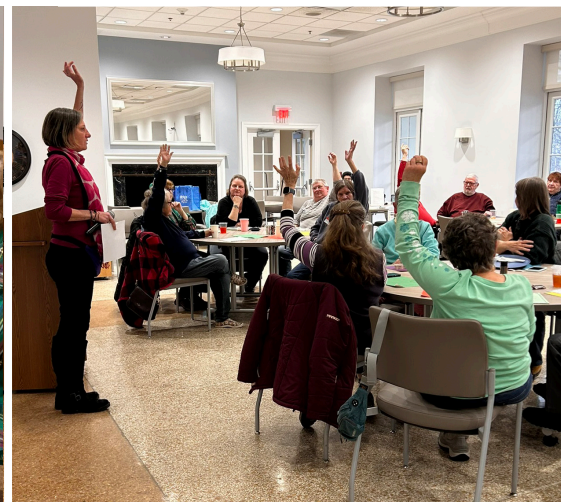
The tapestry made by the SAGE Knitting & Fiber Arts Group and Project Out Loud is almost finished. It fills up all of the center tables!

We'll hold a reception in March when we hang it in the center. Stay tuned!



## Second Sunday Potluck in Syracuse

Leslie brought fun activities for the new year and lots of great information about the Neighborhood Advisor Program from Masani.



## The times, they are a-changing ...

Last month Johna and Carol were laid off and our Ambassador program was suspended. THANKFULLY, staff and ambassadors will continue volunteer in some ways, we are so grateful for that.

It may seem like this happened suddenly, but it's been a potential outcome of our funding loss since last summer. The staff and ambassador positions all relied on the state grant we lost. We tried a number of ways to raise needed funds, and we are still trying. We are just not there yet.

It's been a very difficult time, because with these folks on board, SAGE reached new heights in outreach and programming. I think it's important to say that we will not turn our backs on underserved communities, even though the state isn't funding our outreach. We are planning events this year to address BIPOC and Trans Issues, and reaching out to Community Foundations in Oswego, Utica, and Watertown to fund our regional potlucks.

You may be surprised to see new programs, while hearing at the same time we are in a tough financial spot. There are two reasons for this-- we have specific grant funding for some, and for others volunteers are running things. This has always been true for most of our programs, but now we have-- and need-- even more volunteer help.

You're probably tired of hearing me ask for donations, and we still need them. But there are other ways you can help SAGE stay strong for people who need us. Think about volunteering. Currently, volunteers lead all of the programs you see in the calendar of this issue, with the exception of the Take Care Together Kick-Off, the Soup Off, and Theater Thursday. Carol B and Vivian C came to us with the idea of leading a string instrument music group, and many men have come forward asking for another men's support group. Do you have an idea of your own for a group?



### From the Executive Director

by Kim Dill

We are now looking for five volunteers to staff our center for a few hours each day of the week. If you are willing to give two or three hours one day a week, let us know. The idea is to have a different activity every day available to people who come into the center. It could be games one day, crafts the next. Maybe a puzzle day or a book club. You get the idea. Please contact Leslie at 315-478-1923 or llamb@sageupstate.org if you are interested.

Also, please support our programs. Your participation keeps things interesting, friendly, and welcoming. We've all been to programs where just a few show up. Compare that to a room full of people -- what a difference! If you need an incentive, The Take Care Together program starts this month. See you here. --Kim



## Dinner Out in January



# Sage Upstate Pride 5K

Central New York June 2025

## SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, June 14, Step-Off at 9 am  
Long Branch Park

We welcome friends old and new. It's our 10 year anniversary, and we have a brand new name! Stay tuned for details.



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 Yes  No